

I am terribly distressed by the decision of Sinclair Broadcasting to require that its affiliates show an openly partisan movie and to justify it by saying that it is news. Sure, it's news, but so would any of the recent films that talk of how hollow was the President's justification for the war in Iraq. Why were none of these films shown on Sinclair stations months ago, when it was NEWS.

Moreover, Sinclair's decision to force their stations to air an anti-Kerry documentary days before the election is a clear example of the dangers of media consolidation.

Sinclair uses the public airwaves free of charge, and is obligated by law to serve the public interest. But when large companies control the airwaves, we get more of what's good for the bottom line and less of what we need for our democracy. Instead of something produced at "News Central" far away, it's more important that we see real people from our own communities and more substantive news about issues that matter.

Sinclair's actions show why we need to strengthen media ownership rules, not weaken them. They show why the license renewal process needs to involve more than a returned postcard.

If Janet Jackson can get you to take action on the content of our airwaves, surely this would too (I hope).

Thank you.
Matthew Levey